Amendments to the Claims

Please amend Claims 1, 10, 13, and 18. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing

1. (Currently amended) A method for grooming network traffic in a digital cross connect, comprising:

grooming inbound traffic at a first transport switch from among multiple transport switches for at least one local switch, the at least one local switch transmitting the groomed inbound traffic to at least one destination other than the multiple transport switches; and

grooming, at a second transport switch from among the multiple transport switches, outbound traffic received at the at least one local switch from at least one source other than the multiple transport switches at a second transport switch for the at least one local switch.

2. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the grooming of inbound and outbound traffic is performed independently.

3. (Original) The method according to Claim 2 wherein the grooming of inbound and outbound traffic is performed free of tandem tying the first and second transport switches.

4. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 further including configuring the at least one local switch to operate with the first and second transport switches.

5. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 further including performing protocol switching at the at least one local switch.

6.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1 further including performing grooming at at least a third transport switch.

7.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the first and second transport switches are at least one of the following:

        wideband crossconnect switches, narrowband crossconnect switches, or broadband crossconnect switches.

8.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1 performed in a central office.

9.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1 performed in an electrical, optical, or wireless network.

10.   (Currently amended) A system for grooming network traffic in a digital cross connect, comprising:

        a first transport switch, from among multiple transport switches, that grooms inbound traffic for at least one local switch, the at least one local switch transmitting the groomed inbound traffic to at least one destination other than the multiple transport switches; and

        a second transport switch, from among the multiple transport switches, that grooms outbound traffic received at the at least one local switch from at least one source other than the multiple transport switches for the at least one local switch.

11.   (Original) The system according to Claim 10 wherein the first transport switch and second transport switch operate substantially free of intermachine tandem ties.

12.   (Original) The system according to Claim 10 wherein the local switch is configured to operate with the first and second transport switches.

13. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A system ~~according to Claim 10 wherein the~~ for grooming network traffic in a digital cross connect, comprising:

a first transport switch that grooms inbound traffic for at least one ~~local switch is~~ a protocol switch; and

a second transport switch that grooms outbound traffic for the at least one protocol switch.

14. (Original) The system according to Claim 10 further including a third transport switch that grooms other traffic.

15. (Original) The system according to Claim 10 wherein the transport switches are at least one of the following: a wideband crossconnect switch, narrowband crossconnect switch, or broadband crossconnect switch.

16. (Original) The system according to Claim 10 used in a central office.

17. (Original) The system according to Claim 10 used in an electrical, optical or wireless network.

18. (Currently amended) A system for grooming network traffic in a digital cross connect, comprising:

means for grooming inbound traffic at a first transport switch from among multiple transport switches for at least one local switch, the at least one local switch transmitting the groomed inbound traffic to at least one destination other than the multiple transport switches; and

means for ~~grooming outbound traffic~~ grooming, at a second transport switch from among the multiple transport switches, outbound traffic received at the at least one local switch from at least one source other than the multiple transport switches ~~for the at least one local switch~~, the first transport switch being distinct from the second transport switch.

19.   (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 1 wherein grooming inbound traffic at the first transport switch includes separating higher speed traffic streams into lower speed traffic streams, and grooming outbound traffic at the second transport switch includes packing lower speed traffic streams into higher speed traffic streams.

20.   (Previously presented) The system according to Claim 10 wherein the first transport switch separates higher speed traffic streams into lower speed traffic streams, and the second transport switch packs lower speed traffic streams into higher speed traffic streams.